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MANAGEMENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

U. S. Department of Agriculture

A summary of significant events of
interest to USDA management

Issue #67
August 8, 1977

OE0 CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE REVIEW PROJECT... OE0 is conducting a "Summer Camp" civil rights compliance review of ES, FNS and FS. Fifteen states with four campsites each have been selected.

The review will evaluate the effectiveness of each agency's compliance review procedures for monitoring compliance with civil rights laws and regulations.

Based on thirty-six reviews, we have found:

- Segregated housing and activity groups at campsites.
- Camp facilities utilized mainly by White campers.
- All White committees plan camp activities.
- Failure to obtain assurances of compliances from groups utilizing camp facilities.
- Civil rights instructions not issued to camp operators by State or Regional offices.
- Agency compliance reviewers failing to visit campsites during reviews.

A report and recommendations will be provided to ES, FNS and FS after additional reviews are completed in August. (Contact: Richard J. Peer, OE0, ext. 77327)

APHIS HELPS MINORITY CONTRACTOR..... A minority contractor in Minneapolis was awarded a \$189,525 contract for ground spraying of herbicide to control Witchweed in North and South Carolina. The contractor received assurances from two lending institutions that he would have no problems receiving loans of \$65,000 and \$20,000. Two weeks prior to reporting he was advised that the application for the \$65,000 loan was denied. Without this loan, he would be in a default situation. APHIS contracting personnel could find no reason for denial of the loan and made arrangements to make a \$65,000 advance payment.

The advancement of funds insures that the Agency's Program objectives are accomplished and it provides an opportunity for another minority firm to receive a share of the government's business. In addition, this contract will provide employment opportunities for up to 33 minority workers in an area of substantial and persistent unemployment. This was much more desirable than default proceedings which would have resulted in higher procurement prices with a defaulted contractor financially unable to pay the additional costs. (Contact: Paul J. McCloskey, OE0, ext. 77921)

AGENCIES BENEFIT FROM ASCS "EXTRA" PERSONAL PROPERTY..... Between January 1 and June 1 SCS, FmHA, and ES obtained 31 desks, 22 chairs, 57 typewriters, 4 copiers, 7 calculators, 19 sectional files, 2 dictating units, 50 room dividers, 31 tables, 1 range pole and 2 storage cabinets from ASCS's list of "Extra" personal property. Approximately \$52,000 of program funds have been saved as a result of this "Extra" property reutilization. (Contact: Bill Saltsgaver, 00, ext. 77557)

CONTROLLING GRADE ESCALATION IN THE GENERAL SCHEDULE.....The Office of Management and Budget has issued a bulletin which establishes a plan for monitoring, evaluating and controlling increases in the average grade of specific General Schedule occupations within executive branch agencies. In conjunction with this effort, the OMB and the CSC have developed a new computerized information system for analyzing changes in average grade. The system will provide detailed information on specific occupations within a department and its subordinate bureaus where grade escalation has occurred. It will also provide comparative cost data to illustrate the cost implications of maintaining the present grade structure as opposed to exploring alternative structures. The first data from this system is expected shortly.

Agencies will be required to examine the data and identify those occupations where there is a substantial cost impact, rate of increase, or potential for savings. Agencies must then determine whether the increases in average grade are fully supported and required by changes in the nature and complexity (not volume) of the work, whether the existing grade structure is essential in light of comparative cost data on alternative grade structures in other agencies, and the grade structure Government-wide. Agencies would then set grade reduction targets for those occupations which fail to meet the preceding criteria. Agencies will be required to submit proposed occupational grade reduction targets to OMB along with their FY 1979 budget requests.

The latest Government-wide average grade figures available from CSC are for March 1977. At that time the Government-wide average grade for permanent full-time employees was 8.20; for all employees it was 8.05. USDA average grade figures for the same month were 8.80 and 8.72 respectively.

Agency heads have primary responsibility for ensuring that adequate grade reduction goals are set and implementation plans developed and carried out. As long as agreed-upon goals are being met, agencies are not required to submit their implementation plans to OMB. (Contact: Joe Logan, OP, ext. 77131)

ADMINISTRATION GRADE AND PAY RETENTION BILL.....The Civil Service Commission has developed a grade and pay retention proposal which was sent to the Congress on July 11. This proposal, which has the Administration's endorsement, has the following major features:

- General Schedule (GS) and Federal Wage System (FWS) employees with at least one year in grade whose positions are downgraded due to reclassification or reduction-in-force in various reorganization-type actions would be covered.
- Employees would retain their grade for two years with full pay increases. This would be followed, as necessary, by indefinite pay retention, with employees receiving one-half of all future pay increases until such time as the maximum salary of the grade to which assigned meets or exceeds their retained pay rate.
- The Civil Service Commission would have strong, statutory-based authority to require priority consideration for vacancies and retraining, where appropriate, for employees on retained grades.

(Contact: Joe Logan, OP, ext. 77131)

NEW APPOINTMENTS.....

...FAS - Mr. Thomas R. Hughes, a Washington consultant, has been appointed Administrator of the Foreign Agricultural Service. Mr. Hughes has been a consultant since 1969, serving primarily as the Washington representative for the State of Minnesota and the Texas Department of Agriculture. Prior to that he was Executive Assistant to Orville L. Freeman, during Freeman's tenure as Governor of Minnesota and as Secretary of Agriculture.

...OGSM - Dr. Kelly M. Harrison, an Associate Professor of Agricultural Economics at Michigan State University, has been appointed General Sales Manager. Dr. Harrison has been on the Michigan State faculty since receiving his doctorate in agricultural economics there in 1966. He has worked primarily on agricultural marketing, and spent over five years in Colombia and Brazil supervising U.S. Agency for International Development projects designed to improve the agricultural marketing systems in those countries.

...ES - Dr. Neill Schaller has been appointed Administrator of the Extension Service. Dr. Schaller was formerly Associate Managing Director of the Farm Foundation, a research and education foundation located in Oak Brook, Illinois. Prior to going to the Farm Foundation, he served as an Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator in the International Agricultural Development Service and the Foreign Agricultural Service of USDA. Dr. Schaller's service with USDA also includes 11 years as an agricultural economist with ERS.

(Contact: Joe Logan, OP, ext. 77131)

PRESIDENT'S REPORTING BURDEN REDUCTION PROGRAM.....Overall, USDA has made adequate progress toward meeting the goal of a 5% reduction in its reporting burden. However, three USDA agencies continue to show a net increase in reporting burden. As these three agencies are responsible for about 50% of the Department's reporting burden, their cooperation is essential. Other Federal agencies also have active programs in this area.

The Federal Paperwork Commission has singled out the Federal Reserve as having effective internal procedures for evaluating and clearing all reporting requirements. Overall responsibility for monitoring, coordinating and controlling the clearance process has been assigned to a senior staff officer who checks report formats and maintains the reports inventory with a small staff. Critical and searching evaluations are made at various review levels.

The effectiveness of this report management program depends upon the involvement of senior staff members on the Steering Committee on Reports Review. This committee has a responsibility to question originators of new reports and everyone involved works toward reducing the public reporting burden.

Revitalization of the reports management program at the Federal Reserve has been an unqualified success. Much of this is attributed to innovative techniques and the development of effective procedures and policy guidelines. (Contact: Don Barrowman, SRS, ext. 76201)

CONTRACT COMPLIANCE DIVISION TRANSFER.....The Contract Compliance Division of OEO will be transferred to the Defense Logistics Agency on October 1. A total of 29 professional and 10 clerical employees is involved. All USDA agencies are urged to give careful consideration to these employees when filling vacancies. The SF-171's may be obtained from OP-POD.
(Contact: Mary Goode, OP, ext. 74804)

NEW DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR FOR MANAGEMENT IN ASCS.....Don Gillis, Director of the Commodity Operations Division has been appointed Deputy Director, Management. Don has been with ASCS for 27 years including 11 years in State and county offices. From 1972 to 1975 he was Director of the ASCS Minneapolis Commodity Office.

1977 SAVINGS BOND CAMPAIGN.....This is the final report on this year's bond campaign. USDA now has a participation rate of 74 percent; an increase of 7% since the beginning of the campaign. A total of 5,593 new participants have enrolled and over 3,000 allotments have been increased.

Several agencies are to be commended for their performance in exceeding the participation goal of 80%: NFC, 98%; FCIC, 98%; FmHA, 96%; FCS, 92%; FNS, 88%; SRS, 82%; and SEC, 80%. FGIS is to be commended by nearly doubling the previous 33% participation rate to 65%.

Agency	Total Number of New Allotments	Total Number of Allotment Increases	Total Number of Cancellations	Present Participation	
				Beginning	Current
OALJ	1	0	0	41	47
AMS	133	69	10	75	78
ARS	325	252	44	62	65
ASCS	227	178	10	67	76
APHIS	597	415	55	61	64
OA	53	46	4	67	76
ADS	24	34	2	57	62
COMM	23	5	0	45	58
CSRS	9	3	0	56	66
EMSC	24	19	1	61	79
ERS	90	84	5	60	68
OEO	8	7	0	50	59
ES	6	11	2	58	60
FCS	9	4	0	81	92
FmHA	610	266	28	88	96
FCIC	82	69	2	84	98
FGIS	328	32	4	33	65
FNS	399	253	21	71	88
FAS	53	20	1	54	65
FS	1,121	489	107	64	69
OGC	12	19	1	54	57
OGSM	6	10	0	68	74
OI	50	8	2	53	66
OF & OBPE	13	15	0	65	74
NAL	7	7	1	61	65
NFC	280	94	14	68	98
OO	33	13	0	62	72
P&SA	6	14	0	75	77
OP	13	6	1	49	60
RDS	7	4	0	53	77
REA	83	63	3	67	78
SEC	19	3	0	54	80
SCS	781	411	43	73	79
SRS	161	78	11	69	82
USDA TOTAL	5,593	3,002	372	67	74

(Contact: Frank Gearde, Jr., FNS, ext. 78974)